

## NATURE STUDIES IN PARK.

How City Gives School Children  
Lessons in Trees and Flowers.

Those practical minded persons who have wondered what the city could gain from its expenditures for botanical gardens would learn much from the visits of public school children to the New-York Botanical Gardens, in The Bronx. For instance, last spring all the children in the latter half of the fourth grade in the public schools of The Bronx were taken to the park on three different days to study nature at first hand. In all more than 2,300 children received the benefit of a course of talks by a corps of botanists.

There were three lectures, given in turn by Dr. N. L. Britton, the director of the garden; Dr. Marshall A. Howe, assistant curator, and George V. Nash, head gardener, the subjects being "Seedless Plants," "Cultivation of Plants" and "Classification of Plants." Each lecture was given three times, as only eight hundred children could be accommodated in the lecture hall of the museum at once. The lectures were illustrated with finely colored lantern slides, many of which had been prepared for them. After the talk, which lasted forty-five minutes, the audience was divided into companies of from fifty to seventy. These groups were sent out into the grounds at intervals of five minutes under the care of a teacher and an expert connected with the gardens. The groups were escorted from point to point where living illustrations of what had been described were to be found. At each point was a demonstrator from the garden staff to supplement what had been said in the hall. The subjects chosen for the lectures covered the botanical work of the grade for the season.

While in the main the children asked intelligent questions, now and then the tramp through the park was enlivened by odd comments, inquiries and answers. The visit was made in school hours, as it was thought to be valuable school work, but, judging from their apparel, it was considered by many of the children to be a picnic. One child was heard to inquire plaintively:

"Is there any place where I can get some soda water?"



A "LIVING ILLUSTRATION."

The children gathered around a demonstrator who is describing a plant.

One of the demonstrators learned that an intelligent look does not always mean that a child has grasped what one is saying. The first lecture was on "Seedless Plants." After seeing some specimens of seaweeds taken from a case in the museum, the first group was led along the walk to a bold ledge of rocks on which mosses, another kind of seedless plants, were growing. In front of the rock was the demonstrator awaiting the children. Before him was a barrel on which was a board. A number of kinds of moss were displayed on the board. The demonstrator told about the different kinds of moss on the neighboring trees and the rocks. Then he turned to one small girl and asked what was growing on one of the trees.

"Seaweed," she promptly replied.

It so happened that in a later lecture this same demonstrator was assigned to make the children acquainted with a certain clump of trees.

"Can any one tell me what this is?" he asked of the first party which came to him, pointing as he spoke toward a tree. A small girl thereupon piped up:

"Moss."

The impression which the lecturers and demonstrators made on the children was evidently great. One of Dr. Britton's staff was walking along in the lower part of The Bronx one day, when suddenly his hand was seized by a small girl. She pulled him over to a wall, crying:

"There, see! there are some lichens."

One horse chestnut now growing in the park had an exciting time on the afternoon of Arbor Day, when one of the lectures was given. For a short time it did not know "where it was at." Ten minutes before the lecture was to begin Dr. Britton's attention was called to the fact that it was Arbor Day.

"We ought to plant a tree," he said, and immediately a tree was ordered. It was duly planted when the first party came to the spot, and then it occurred to Dr. Britton that the other parties ought to see a tree planted also. Accordingly, he ordered the horse chestnut



LISTENING TO A TALK ON PLANT LIFE IN THE BRONX BOTANICAL MUSEUM.

which had just been planted taken up again. The poor tree that afternoon was solemnly set in the ground twelve times, only to be torn up ruthlessly again within two or three minutes in order to be ready to play its part before the next group. The tree survived, however, and is now growing lustily.

The practical results of the visit to the park proved to be so valuable that the lectures will be given again this fall to about five thousand children of the second half of the fourth and fifth years. The lectures were arranged by Dr.

"Singing of the birds?" said the convict, in a puzzled voice.

"Yes," said the little girl.

"What birds?" asked the man.

"The well meaning but ignorant child, with a helpful smile, replied:

"The little jail birds. They must be a great comfort to you."

## THE SUMMER BOARDER.

Depends on the Individual How Joys  
of Country Life Are Taken.

The exodus from the city to the country and to the seashore reaches high tide in August, and the summer boarder and "summer people" in general are abroad in the land. They are putting a great deal of money into circulation in the rural and seashore districts, and yet they are not regarded as an unmixed blessing in some localities. Indeed, the writer has heard them characterized as "them summer trash" by at least one scornful old woman, who added that she dreaded to see them and their "dratted auttomobiles" invading the neighborhood in which she lives. She was generous enough to admit that some of them were not "so bad," and summed up the whole matter by adding:

"It depends altogether on who you git."

One can readily understand that the summer boarder's capacity for being "pleasant," his willingness to adapt himself to his environment without being "fussy," and his regard for courtesy are all to be considered when summing up his desirability as a boarder. The old woman was right. It does depend on whom you "git" if the rural boarding house keeper is to derive any pleasure in keeping summer boarders.

"There's a terrible lot o' difference in summer boarders," said this rural oracle. "If some of them ever had any manners they leave them at home when they come to the country. It riles me so to hear them makin' fun of ev'rything they see and hear in the country, an' the best you can do for them ain't no ways good enough nor up to what they are 'accustomed to' in their own homes. An' them that has the least in their own homes are the ones that put on the most when they come to the country, an' some o' the things they complain they can't get 'accustomed to' goin' without' in the country are things they never had in their own homes. I know that my son's folks had a couple boardin' with them last summer, an' they fussed all the time because there wa'n't any 'bawth' in the house, an' both of them talked about how much they missed their 'morning plunge,' an' they didn't see how on earth us country folks ever got along without a 'bawth tub,' an' we happened to find out afterward that they lived in three little tucked up rooms in the city an' that they didn't have any 'bawth' of their own, an' they must have taken

their 'morning plunge' in a wash bowl or a common tin washpan, for all I know. It's just as I say; them that puts on the most airs in the country has the least in their own homes."

The charge that the summer boarder sometimes leaves his "manners" at home when he goes to the country is not altogether unfounded. Everything becomes an object of ridicule to a certain class of "summer people" and the "sweet flower of courtesy" seems never to bloom in the garden of their hearts. They "make fun" so indiscriminately and with so little tact and so little regard for the feelings of others that they deserve to be charged with having "no manners at all." Every old person they see becomes a "character" or a "queer old party" in their estimation, and the most ordinary occurrence becomes "awfully funny" to them.

"Then there are others," said the old woman who was sitting in judgment on the summer boarder, "who are just as nice and pleasant as they can be. They don't expect to find 'bawths' an' finger bowls an' meals served in half a dozen courses in the ordinary farmhouse, an' they don't forget that it is possible for a country bred person to have just as much feelin' an' refinement as a city bred person. They don't make fun of your friends an' neighbors, nor of the pictures in your family album, nor on your walls, nor of anything else. They don't ask you to wait on 'em as if they was in the Hotel Astory, an' some of 'em even ain't above makin' their own beds. Them kind ain't so bad."

The summer boarder who is disposed to do so may bring a great deal of pleasure into the oftentimes monotonous and wearisome lives of those who receive them into their homes. One farmer's wife, living far up among the Vermont hills and rarely seeing beyond them, while an actual city like Boston, or even Springfield, was an unknown world to her, voiced a sentiment not uncommon to farmers' wives when she said: "My summer boarders bring to me the great world to which I cannot go. They bring a happy change into my life, and I am always glad when they come and sorry when they go, even though they add much to my household duties. They leave magazines and papers, and even books, behind them, and now and then our rural postman brings me a package of fresh papers and magazines from them to show that they keep me in mind, and once in a while a letter comes along telling me how much they appreciated my efforts to make them comfortable while they were with me."

This woman's summer boarders were manifestly of the kind that were "not so bad," and their "manners" must have come to the country with them.

The city dweller actually accustomed to bath-rooms and finger bowls and a fresh napkin at each meal can often find in God's great and beautiful out-of-doors in the country enough to compensate him for the loss of these luxuries when he is a guest at some old farmhouse in which he has no right to expect such things. If he cannot be a misfit in the country and should go elsewhere. The real lover of nature is glad to put behind him all the conventionalities of city life, and his two or three or four weeks on the hills or in some fair green valley are worth more to him than all the rest of the year. The clear streams or lakes afford him a more enjoyable bath than the most luxurious city bathroom can give him, and the air of the real country is not to be duplicated in the most generous expanse of city park. The hill towns of New-England, the seashore resorts, the mountain hotels, the farmhouses all over the land are now the mecca of the summer boarder. The summer vacation is now one of the wise provisions for all, and the summer boarder is having an all too fleeting experience of the joys of country life.



IN A HURRY TO REACH THE NEXT DEMONSTRATOR.